

Start Drilling for Oil on Farm East of Rockford

REJECT BIDS ON HOME PAINTING

Receipt of a contrary ruling by the Chicago regional office of the public housing administration caused the Winnebago county housing authority board to reject all bids received for the painting of houses in the Blackhawk court and Victory homes projects last night.

The ruling, based on the failure by trustees to accept the lowest bids submitted, caused the authority board to reverse a May 11 decision awarding the contracts. New bids will be sought June 10 in hope that the painting can be finished before Sept. 1.

Low bids for both projects were submitted by Bell Decorators, Inc., Chicago, who proposed to do the painting for \$27,138. The Blackhawk court contract had been awarded to Karl Schoening and Sons, Rockford, for \$16,685, and the Victory homes painting was given to Rosenquist and Moyer, Rockford, for \$17,251. The total cost under these contracts would have been \$33,936.

Must Brush Paint
The board based its awards upon the fact that Bell Decorators proposed to paint the housing units by the spray method, which is prohibited by local painters' union rules. Brushes must be used in Rockford, union rules demand.

Specifications published when the bids were first asked did not include a brush-painting requirement. The specifications for the June 10 letting will contain such a provision, the board declared last night.

A letter setting forth the board's objections to what they consider an arbitrary infringement upon local authority will be sent to William E. Bergeron, director of the Chicago field office.

Oppose Rejection
"We'll tell Chicago that we are punning this authority," declared Chairman Charles W. Roe, "otherwise, I don't want anything more to do with it."

William Collins, board member, voted against rejecting the bids, although he voted May 11 to reject all bids and readvertise. He explained his negative vote last night as due to dissatisfaction with the action of the Chicago office. Board member Oscar Sundeen did not vote last night on the motion to reject bids.

The board members agreed, however, that they expect to open lower bids June 10, partly due to reductions in paint prices.

POLICE BOARD TO PICK HEAD

In its first meeting during the new term of Mayor C. Henry Bloom, the board of fire and police commissioners tonight will name a chairman to succeed John M. Nolan, who served for the past seven years.

Nolan, first appointed to the board in July, 1942, to succeed Warren A. McCollum, was not re-named in April when Mayor Bloom listed his appointees.

Frank R. Ditto, former city treasurer, was appointed along with Charles W. Roe, secretary. Terms of the other two board members, Arthur Alfredson and Herbert Johnson, did not expire at this time.

The board will hold its organization meeting in the city council committee rooms on the third floor of the city hall. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Only major business is the selection of a chairman.

CHURCH MARKS CENTURY YEAR

St. Peter's chapel, Grand Detour, will celebrate its 100th anniversary with a choral evensong service at 4 p. m. Sunday, June 12.

The Rev. Vernon L. S. Jones, rector of St. Luke's church, Dixon, who is in charge of St. Peter's, announced yesterday that Bishop Wallace E. Conkling of the Chicago diocese will officiate.

The little church is the second oldest Episcopal church in the diocese, being founded in 1845 by the Rev. Abraham J. Warner. The parish was organized in 1847 and the cornerstone of the church was laid June 17, 1849. First confirmation was administered there in 1850 by Bishop Philander Chase.

Zion Church To Support 2 Missionaries

Zion Lutheran congregation of Rockford has undertaken to send two missionaries to the Augustana Lutheran mission field in Tanganyika, East Africa, and to pay for their care and salaries in the first missionary project of its kind undertaken by the local church.

The couple, who will be commissioned here later this summer, are the Rev. Melvin Lofgren, who will be ordained a pastor of the Augustana Lutheran church at Mt. Olivet church, Minneapolis, Sunday afternoon, June 12, and Mrs. Lofgren, the former Dorothy Hanson, who was parish worker with the Zion congregation for three years prior to her marriage a year ago.

The Lofgrens will speak and sing at the evening service in Zion church next Sunday, June 5, prior to going to Minneapolis for the annual meeting of the church body and for ordination. Both have been called as missionaries to Africa by the board of foreign missions of the Augustana synod. The Rev. Mr. Lofgren has completed four years of study at Augustana theological seminary. Mrs. Lofgren has been a teacher in the Rock Island public school system the past year.

The Rev. Mr. Lofgren's father is a pastor at Greeley, Colo., in the congregation which the Rev. Joseph Conrad, pastor of Zion church here, served following his ordination. Mrs. Lofgren is from Wakefield, Mich.

The Rev. Mr. Conrad said that he expects Dr. P. O. Bersell, president of the Augustana Lutheran church, to be here for the commissioning service later this summer.

The Lofgrens are scheduled to sail for Africa in September.

The Rev. Mr. Conrad will attend the convention sessions in Mt. Olivet church in Minneapolis. John Nelson and Alfred Johnson of the Zion congregation also plan to attend.

PERCOLATOR IS CAUSE OF FIRE

An electric coffee percolator that boiled dry caused fire and smoke damage to the Nels Thornbloom residence, 522 South Johnson avenue, shortly after 5 p.m. yesterday.

Engine companies No. 1 and 6 and truck company No. 1 under Assistant Chief Thomas J. Hafey answered the alarm but the rig from No. 1 was forced to return to quarters when the brakes on the pumper failed.

The hot percolator ignited the table on which it was placed and caused fire damage to the wall and ceiling. Smoke damage also was reported on the second floor of the home.

In other fires, firemen extinguished burning grass at Logan and Auburn streets at 4:10 p.m. and a brush fire at 307 Bremer street at 5:50 p.m.

PLAN AMVETS' STATE MEET

Freeport, Ill., June 1.—Arrangements for the Amvets' state convention, opening June 9 and ending June 12, have been completed, Milo Adleman, convention chairman, said today.

The Freeport Amvets post, official host to the convention, expects 1,000 delegates and visitors to attend the convention. All business sessions will be held in the Moose hall.

Harold Keats, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., national president, and Mrs. Adeline Fogg, president of the national auxiliary, will attend. Edward J. Barrett, Illinois secretary of state, is scheduled for an address.

A parade is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday, June 11. Harold Russell, armless Amvet, will lead an Americanism rally.

Two men, Harlan Swisher, Champaign, and Clinton Craig, Kankakee, are candidates for state commander. The election will be held Sunday morning.

Shirts, Socks Taken In School Burglary

Sterling, Ill., June 1.—Four new sweat shirts and two dozen pairs of socks were taken from the equipment room of Sterling Township high school stadium sometime over the weekend, school officials discovered today.

Seek to "Bring In" First Oil Well in Rockford Area



Hopeful that they will "bring in" the first oil well in northern Illinois, the Seele family, father, son and grandson, all help to operate the drilling rig on their farm east of Rockford. In the upper left photo, Herman Seele, 66, observes while his son, Ivan, 35, and grandson, Robert, 12, guide the two-ton steel bit into the well casing. In the upper right photo, Ivan and his father check data on soil and rock structure noted during a week's operations. At the left, Ivan checks the measurements on some 10-inch steel casing, which will line the well as they go deeper into the earth, possibly to a depth of 2,000 feet, in search of "liquid gold."

Nab Parents For Leaving Baby Alone

Parents of an 11-month-old baby were held in the county jail last night on charges of contributing to the dependency of a minor child after police detectives found the infant lying on the floor of the couple's room while the parents were away at work.

Capt. Ralph A. E. Johnson said the couple held was William Stevens, 28, 517 Catlin street, and his wife, Mary, 24. Detectives Richard Whale and Frank Zenisek found the baby, crackers nearby, presumably for food, when they answered a complaint about noon yesterday.

They later arrested the couple after taking the baby to the Children's Home of Rockford.

Driver in Trailer Mishap Identified

Frank A. Shores, 58, 2604 Preston street, yesterday identified himself at police headquarters as the driver of a jeep pulling a trailer from which Terrance Champion, 9, 1222 Elder terrace, fell and injured his head Tuesday.

Shores told Traffic Officer Robert Holmberg he saw the boy fall off but saw him get to his feet and move away almost immediately.

Shores was not held. He said he could not prevent the youngsters from climbing onto the open, flat top trailer.

UNHURT AS CAR HITS BICYCLE

"A bad scare" apparently was the only injury suffered by 8-year-old David Connell, 922 1/2 Ferguson street, when the bicycle he was riding crashed into an automobile in front of 705 Cunningham street shortly before 4:30 p. m. yesterday.

Connell, 31, 115 South Henrietta avenue, driver of the car, told Detectives Russell Forson and Harley Chew that he was driving west on Cunningham street when he saw the boy emerge from behind a parked car in front of 705 Cunningham street.

Wangeman said he swerved his machine in an attempt to miss the boy, but could not avoid the bicycle.

The boy was taken to Rockford Memorial hospital by the officers. The attending physician said the boy was unhurt, except for being frightened.

Roper Local Votes to Continue with Strike

Striking employees of the George D. Roper corporation plant here, members of local No. 39, U.A.W.-C.I.O., voted last night to stay on strike in a meeting in C.I.O. hall, 112 North 2nd street, according to Rocco Prabich, chairman of the local.

Members of the local have been on strike for almost two weeks, the walkout having been called May 20. To date, there have been no negotiation meetings between management and the union.

Prabich also announced last night that the credit union office in the Roper plant will be open Tuesdays and Fridays from noon to 1 p. m.

Police Officer Crew Razes Landmark Here

Timber and metal siding, part of an East State street landmark razed yesterday by a crew of off-duty policemen, will form a porch for the police range near Camp Grant.

The building at 108 East State street, housed John's Eatmore luncheon since 1939. John Mitzalis, the former operator, watched 15 husky officers tear down what had been his source of livelihood.

The policemen were given the building for the material it contained by the Rockford Fraternal Order of Eagles club, through the Parson real estate agency. Mitzalis has moved to 212 East State street.

2 Children Injured in Falls Here

Two 13-year-olds, one a boy, the other a girl, received medical treatment in emergency rooms across the hall from each other in Rockford Memorial hospital last night.

Her right arm out of a cast only two weeks, Nicolaena Fennimella, 401 Stanley street, fractured it in almost the same place shortly before 9 o'clock last night.

Detectives Howard Fitzgerald and R. E. Anderson, who took the girl to the hospital, said she suffered the broken arm when she fell while playing.

In the emergency room across the hall, Robert Zimmer, 1412 Spring court, received treatment for a severe laceration to his right leg and an ankle sprain received when he fell off his bicycle while riding.

Detectives Robert Taphorn and Mauritz Johnson gave him first aid treatment before he was taken to the hospital in the police ambulance.

Versatile Speaker to Address Rotary Club

Russell C. Ross, Los Angeles, Cal., educator, writer and businessman, will speak on "Paging Patrick Henry" when he appears at a meeting of Rockford Rotarians this noon in the LaFayette hotel American room.

Ross is public and industrial relations expert for Plomb Tool company, Los Angeles, touring the country for the speakers' bureau of the National Association of Manufacturers.

The Rotarian speaker has been a public school superintendent, a university professor, and editor and publisher of a community newspaper. He is a graduate of Des Moines university and the University of Iowa.

Hospitalized after Fall in Kitchen

Ralph Hockstetter, 40, 1050 West Jefferson street, was taken to St. Anthony hospital in the police ambulance when he grew faint and fell, suffered a head laceration, in his home shortly after 10 o'clock last night.

Traffic Officer Frank Lutovsky said Hockstetter had gone to the kitchen to get a glass of milk when the fall occurred.

Rockford College Teacher To Retire after 28 Years

After 28 years as a member of the faculty of Rockford college, Lillian Watkins, head of the home economics department and director of household arts, will retire at the close of the school year on June 6 to return to her home in Nashville, Tenn.

Engaged by the late Dr. William A. Maddox, former president of Rockford college, to head the home economics department in 1921, Miss Watkins came here from Columbia university, where she received her master's degree in June of that year. She had previously received her bachelor of science degree from George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, had served as director of the elementary school associated with Ward Belmont college in Nashville and had taught for two years in Rollins college, Winter Park, Fla. She is a member of the American Association of University Women and the American Association of University Professors.

During her entire 28 years as teacher in the local college, Miss Watkins has lived in the college dormitory in preference to having a room or apartment elsewhere. She not only believes she learned to know the students much better by living amongst them, but also enjoyed having them in and out of her room and "liked to hear them scamp-ering around."

Practice Teaching
It was Miss Watkins who first introduced practice teaching in Rockford schools about 1923. In addition to her work in the college, her sincere interest in this community as well as the medical profession (because of a brother, the late Dr. J. T. Watkins of Nashville), led her to respond to the need in Rockford Memorial hospital for an instructor in cookery and nutrition and for 15 years she conducted these classes for student nurses. During the years she has also sent her college students for work and observation in the diet kitchens of the city's hospitals.

More graduates from the home economics department in Rockford college than from any other department have obtained teaching positions in schools in this city. A number of Miss Watkins' students have been appointed, as a result of outstanding work, for internships in hospitals which train college graduates for positions as hospital dietitians and have later obtained good positions as dietitians in large hospitals. At the present time both the head and assistant dietitian in Rockford Memorial hospital, the head dietitian in St. Anthony hospital and the assistant dietitian in Swedish-American hospital, are former pupils of Miss Watkins.

Other graduates from Miss Watkins' department in the college have gone on to take graduate work in large universities to which they were awarded substantial scholarships through the recommendation of the local college, while a number have gone directly into good positions as home advisers with gas and electric companies or county farm bureaus.

Helped Graduates

Because of her personal interest in her students, Miss Watkins has not only advised them in planning their courses in the college, but has also helped them



LILLIAN WATKINS

to find positions upon graduation. She has driven many a mile with her students during the last 28 years for interviews with prospective employers but has always been most discreet about not being present while her pupils were being interviewed.

Born near Anderson, S. C., on a cotton plantation still owned by the family, Miss Watkins' home, since she was 3 years old, has been in Nashville, where she will return to live with her two sisters, the Misses Vivian and Croquette Watkins, and a niece, Violet Jane Watkins. At the present time her niece is teaching in Sullins college, Bristol, Va., while her sister, Vivian, teaches in West End senior high school in Nashville.

Although she doesn't plan to continue teaching, Miss Watkins is happy that she will still be living in an academic atmosphere. Within four blocks of her home in Nashville there are four colleges, Ward-Belmont, Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt university and Scarritt college.

"It breaks my heart—but that is life," Miss Watkins replied when asked how she felt about leaving the college after so many years of teaching there. She added, however, that she has always felt much the same each fall when she left her family in Nashville to return here and again each June when she left here to return home. She has enjoyed thoroughly her work in the college and her associations both with faculty members and students and will always be anxious to do anything she can to help her department in the college continue to progress beyond the point to which she has brought it."

Cuts Leg on Branch Chasing Fly Ball

Chasing a ball in a ravine in Alpine park, William Rettig, 30, 904 Park avenue, suffered a severe laceration on the right leg when he ran into a tree branch, shortly after 7:30 o'clock last night.

Traffic Officer Frank Lutovsky and Sgt. Charles R. McDonnell said Rettig appeared at police headquarters for first aid treatment after the accident. His leg had picked up a large splinter when it struck the tree branch. He was taken to Rockford Memorial hospital by the officers.

SEELE FAMILY SINKS SHAFT

Drilling of a wildcat oil well, prompted by assurances of spiritualists that oil is there, has been underway on the Herman Seele farm east of Rockford during the past week.

Herman Seele and his son, Ivan, 1628 Paradise boulevard, Rockford, purchased well-drilling equipment, erected it, and are performing all the operations themselves, although neither of them have ever had any experience in that type of work.

The story begins at least 80 years ago, when Herman Seele's father-in-law, Henry Knop, first purchased the 80-acre farm, one-half mile north of East State street road on Lyford road.

Saw "Ball of Fire"
A "ball of fire" that seemed to move about on the ground in this particular field, remained a mystery until recently, causing the more superstitious to detour for miles, rather than use the road that passes within 200 yards of the well site.

Seele, 66, and his son have observed the phenomenon many times, although they haven't seen it for about four years.

"It would start near the road," Ivan said yesterday, "and seem to climb the hill to about where the well now is. It would disappear and then reappear at various points on the hill."

He mentioned this curiosity to his housekeeper about a year ago. Somewhat versed in the lore of spiritualist beliefs, she immediately told him that the ball of fire meant that wealth was buried in the vicinity.

Ivan Seele declined to disclose his former housekeeper's name, apparently cognizant of the skeptical attitude that many hold with regard to manifestations of the supernatural.

Visits Other Spiritualists
Intrigued with the idea, Ivan Seele visited three spiritualists in Rockford and neighboring communities.

"I didn't tell them a thing," he averred. "But they described the location, predicting that if I would drill for oil that I would find it."

Verification of the presence of oil was provided by Charles Lane, Belvidere, young Seele said. Lane is a "doodlebug" expert, successful in locating oil in the vicinity of Salem, Seele said. A doodlebug is a type of divining rod, and although it has been disputed as a scientific instrument, has a long-standing reputation for ability to locate water, oil and minerals beneath the surface of the earth.

Proceeding to more recognized scientific tests, Seele sought the services of Dr. Marion Pickford, Bloomington, who tested soil samples and employed an electronic device. These tests also showed positive results, Seele said.

Test with Radar
The final test, this time with a radar instrument, was made a month ago by Burn MacGregor, an oil field expert from Fairfield, Ill. These tests, Seele said, confirmed the existence of rock structures that can contain oil.

Convinced by this time that it was worth a try, Seele and his father purchased cable well-drilling equipment from MacGregor.

Mindful of the interest the project will generate, now that it is public knowledge, Seele obtained gas and oil options on 1,300 acres of land before releasing the closely-guarded secret that he was contemplating the wildcat well. Owners of this additional land will derive some income if gas and oil are discovered on their property, Seele said.

The equipment, similar to that to be seen in oil fields throughout the nation, rises 55 feet into the air from an alfalfa-covered field.

Due to mechanical difficulties experienced at the outset, the Seeles have sunk the well only to a depth of about 68 feet, where they now are entering the first layer of rock. They have sunk steel casing to this point to shut out the water that was seeping into the hole from water-bearing gravel.

Plan 2,000-Foot Well
They expect to continue drilling to a depth of at least 2,000 feet, unless oil is discovered earlier. This may consume the summer, Seele said.

To his knowledge, he said, this is the first attempt to find oil in this area in the past 20 years. Supporting this belief is the fact that the state inspector assigned to this project, "Seele Well No. 1," is Haldon Moore, who lives in Moweaqua, a community located south of Decatur in northern Shelby county.

Samples of soil and rock brought up from each "cutting" must be sent to Moore for analysis. The two-ton drill, pounding downward at the end of a long cable, cuts the hole about five feet deeper during each cutting.

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